CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method for time-stamping a <u>digital</u> document comprising:

    a. receiving identifying data associated with a document ~~D~~ at an outside agency;

    b. creating at said outside agency a first receipt based on said identifying data;

    c. creating at said outside agency a second receipt based on a time indication <u>that</u> <u>indicates when the document was received at the outside agency</u>;

    d. inserting a linking value into said first and second receipts that links the identifying data in the first receipt with the time indication in the second receipt;

    e. certifying said first and second receipts at said outside agency using a cryptographic signature scheme.

2. (Original) The time-stamping method of claim 1 wherein said identifying data comprises a digital representation of at least a portion of said document.

3. (Original) The time-stamping method of claim 2 wherein said identifying data comprises a digital sequence derived by application of a deterministic function to at least a portion of said document.

4. (Original) The time-stamping method of claim 3 wherein said digital sequence is a hash value derived by application of a one-way hashing function to at least a portion of said document.

5. (Original) The time-stamping method of claim 1 wherein said first receipt includes at least a portion of said identifying data and a nonce.

6.   (Original) The time-stamping method of claim 1 wherein said first receipt includes a digital sequence generated by applying a pre-determined function to said identifying data.

7.   (Original) The time-stamping method of claim 1 wherein one of said first and second receipts includes a user identification number associated with a user.

8.   (Original) The time-stamping method of claim 7 wherein one of said first and second receipts includes a sequential record number.

9.   (Currently Amended) A method for time-stamping a <u>digital</u> document comprising:

    a. transmitting identifying data associated with said document to an outside agency;

    b. receiving from said outside agency a first receipt signed by said outside agency using a cryptographic signature scheme, said first receipt including a first digital sequence generated based on said identifying data;

    c. receiving from said outside agency a second receipt signed by said outside agency using a cryptographic signature scheme, said second receipt containing a second digital sequence based on a time indication <u>that indicates when the document was received at the outside agency</u>; and

    d. wherein said first and second receipts include a linking value that links the identifying data in the first receipt with said time indication in the second receipt.

10.   (Original) The time-stamping method of claim 9 wherein said identifying data comprises a digital representation of at least a portion of said document.

11.   (Original) The time-stamping method of claim 10 wherein said identifying data comprises a digital sequence derived by application of a deterministic function to at least a portion of said document.

12.   (Original) The time-stamping method of claim 11 wherein said digital sequence is a hash value derived by application of a one-way hashing function to at least a portion of said document.

13.   (Original) The time-stamping method of claim 9 wherein said first receipt includes at least a portion of said identifying data and a nonce.

14.   (Original) The time-stamping method of claim 9 wherein said first receipt includes a digital sequence generated by applying a pre-determined function to said identifying data.

15.   (Original) The time-stamping method of claim 9 wherein one of said first and second receipts includes a user identification number associated with a user.

16.   (Original) The time-stamping method of claim 15 wherein one of said first and second receipts includes a sequential record number.

17.   (Original) The time-stamping method of claim 9 wherein a common cryptographic signature scheme is used to sign both said first and second receipts.

18.   (Original) The time-stamping method of claim 9 wherein different cryptographic signature schemes are used to sign said first and second receipts.

19.   (Original) The time-stamping method of claim 9 wherein said linking value is a nonce

value.